

**KANSAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO
THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
MEETING MINUTES**

October 4, 2016

The Kansas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights convened via teleconference on October 4, 2016 to provide Committee orientation to new members and returning members, and to discuss completion of the voting rights study begun by the previous Advisory Committee. This was the first meeting of the Committee as appointed August 19, 2016.

Mildred Edwards chaired the meeting and performed the initial roll call of committee members present. This meeting was recorded and open to the public from 4:02 PM to 5:21 PM CDT.

Committee members present:

- Edwards, Mildred (Chair)
- Brien, Russell
- Gieber, Steven
- Dodd, Mark
- Lambert, Kristy
- Nolan, Phyllis
- Perucca, Kirk
- Holt, Ronald
- Ng, Jennifer
- Vega, Gabriela

Committee Members Absent:

- Hodgesmith, Martha
- Unoke, Ewa

USCCR staff present:

- Wojnaroski, Melissa (DFO)
- Sanders, Corrine

Members of the public present: None identified

Meeting Notes/Decisions Made

- I. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. All members were welcomed to the committee and those noted as present (with exception of K. Perucca who joined later) opened the call with introductions.
- II. Committee Roles and Responsibilities
 - a. Mission
 - i. USCCR Staff provided an overview of the Commission and the role and responsibilities of its 51 Advisory Committees.

- ii. Advisory Committees provide advice and recommendations to the Commission regarding civil rights concerns within their jurisdiction (state).
 - iii. Advice and recommendations reflect state and local civil rights concerns that have federal implications.
 - iv. An Advisory Committee has fully achieved its mission when it has presented its findings and made substantive recommendations to the Commission for addressing civil rights concerns in its respective jurisdiction.
- b. Jurisdiction and Scope of Duties
 - i. Committee members reviewed the selected scope of duties and regulations for state advisory committees §42 U.S.C. 1975a (attached)
 - ii. Project proposals should fit into the outlined scope of duties. As a Federal Advisory Committee, the Committee's role is to consider local or state-level civil rights concerns that have potential federal implications.
- c. Ethics
 - i. As special government employees, Committee members may not engage in lobbying or fundraising during Advisory Committee Meetings, or any time they are acting in their official capacity as Committee members. When outside of Committee meetings and not acting in their role as special government employees, Committee members are free to engage in such activities.
 - ii. Committee members should not speak on behalf of the Committee in any public capacity unless officially authorized to do so by a majority of the Committee. Committee members are free to list their membership on the Committee as part of their credentials in public communications.
 - iii. If Committee members have any questions regarding potential conflicts of interest or ethics violations, they should contact the Regional Programs Unit at 312-353-8311 to discuss

III. Project Discussion

- a. USCCR Staff provided an overview of the process for developing and implementing Committee civil rights studies:
 - i. Committee deliberation and development of *project concepts*;
 - ii. Committee *selection* of a project topic;
 - iii. Development of a *project proposal* with Committee approval;
 - iv. Project *Implementation*, including hearing of public testimony;
 - v. *Drafting* of report or advisory memo including findings and recommendations to submit to the Commission, with Committee approval;
 - vi. *Publication* of Report or Advisory Memo and distribution to stakeholders.

- b. The previous installment of the Kansas Advisory Committee heard testimony as part of a study of voting rights in January 2016, but did not issue a report prior to the expiration of their terms in May of 2016,
 - i. The Chair provided an overview of the testimony heard and related themes from this hearing. (attached)
 - ii. Returning Committee members who were also present at this hearing were invited to also provide comment.
 - 1. The outline should further draw out the articulations of the proponents of the Kansas SAFE Act.
 - 2. The report should include a recommendation to look further into what voting requirements opponents of the SAFE Act would support in order to address concerns of voter fraud.
 - 3. Point 6 on the outline, regarding the use of the federal registration form, should be updated to include that revisions have been made to the federal form in Kansas since the hearing took place.
 - 4. An additional finding could be included to reflect the difficulty in identifying proponents of the SAFE Act, although it was unclear whether this reflects the popularity of the Act or the political climate of the state.
 - iii. The Committee discussed continued legal challenges to the Kansas SAFE Act, and the need to include its current status in the final report.
 - iv. USCCR staff provided an outline of the current draft report based on previous testimony.
 - v. **The Chair moved to continue with the drafting of the voting rights report based on 2016 testimony, provided that the contemporary legal context could be included in the final version of the report.**
 - 1. Kristy Lambert seconded the motion**
 - 2. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote**
- c. New Business
 - i. The Chair invited Committee members to consider other topics of civil rights concern in Kansas, to take up after the completion of the voting rights report.
 - ii. Committee members are invited to submit project concepts describing their desired areas of study
 - 1. Project concepts are brief, 1-2 paragraph descriptions of the civil rights topic at hand, including the topic's fit within the Committee's jurisdiction.
 - 2. Project concepts may include reference or links to news sources or other materials further describing the topic.

3. The Chair will work with the DFO to develop and circulate a template for project concepts.
4. **Project concepts should be submitted to the Chair by October 25, 2016.** The Chair will aggregate all project concepts and circulate them to the Committee for review prior to the next meeting.

IV. Officer Elections

a. Vice Chair

- i. The Vice Chair will assist the Chair in preparing for and facilitating meetings as necessary
- ii. The Vice Chair may serve in the capacity of Chair in the Chair's temporary absence.
- iii. **Committee member Kirk Perucca volunteered to serve in this capacity.**
 1. **Mark Dodd moved to accept the nomination of Kirk Perucca to serve as Committee Vice Chair.**
 2. **Russ Brien seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.**

b. Secretary

- i. The Secretary is responsible for recording meeting minutes, collecting documents, and sending reminders to Committee members of upcoming meetings and deadlines.
- ii. The Committee did not receive a nomination for Committee secretary.
- iii. The Committee may choose to rotate the position of Secretary—selecting nominations for one-year terms, rather than asking one person to serve through the remainder of the present term (through August 19, 2020). The Committee will revisit the discussion at the next Committee meeting.

V. Public Comment

- a. At the conclusion of the meeting, public lines were opened for discussion. No public comment was received.

VI. Future Plans and Actions

- a. The Committee determined to set a recurring monthly meeting schedule. The first Tuesday of each month was proposed.
- b. **The next meeting will take place November 1, 2016 – 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.** At that time, the Committee will further discuss the timing for their standing meeting.

VII. Meeting adjourned: 5:21 p.m.